

From the SkillWorks Director

Welcome to fall and our second issue of the SkillWorks newsletter.

This month, I'm excited to be highlighting work on the **Food Stamp Employment and Training Program** that should bring millions of dollars for workforce development to the state; the **One Family Scholars Program** that has benefited more than a few SkillWorks participants; and the **Hyams Foundation**, a funding partner that has been investing in SkillWorks from the very beginning.

I'm also pleased to announce that the Funders Group has approved a continuation grants funding program and will be awarding fourth year SkillWorks funding at the conclusion of our application process this fall.

As always, feel free to contact me at lohsze.leung@tbf.org or 617-338-4377 with any questions or feedback or if you have a great idea for a newsletter article!

Warmly,

Loh-Sze Leung



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Upcoming Events

For SkillWorks partnerships and funders

9/19	SkillWorks Funders Group Meeting, 3-5 pm, The Boston Foundation
9/27	SkillWorks Capacity Building Committee Meeting; next round of capacity building applications due
9/29	Re-funding and continuation grant applications due
9/29	Economic Stimulus Bill Celebration, 4-5:30 pm, The Boston Foundation
10/10	Business Value Assessment follow-up with the Aspen Institute, 11:30-1:00 pm, CEDAC
10/17	SkillWorks Funders Group Meeting, 3-5 pm, The Boston Foundation

On the Hill

Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET)

Among the most exciting provisions of the recently passed Economic Stimulus Bill are changes to the state's Food Stamp Plan that will make it easier for community based organizations, local governments and other education and training providers to collect federal funds under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET).

The Workforce Solutions Group (WSG) discovered this under-utilized program while doing research for the Workforce Solutions Act. WSG met with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and found that FSET was being implemented slowly and there were legislative changes needed to draw down more federal funds and to include community-based organizations, local governments, and community colleges. WSG then developed legislative language, worked with key legislators on incorporating this into the Economic Stimulus bill and worked for its passage.

The Workforce Solutions Group is working closely with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) on implementation now. At present, DTA has contracted with UMass Medical Center to run the program.

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On the Hill

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Food Stamp Employment and Training Program

Under this program, the federal government offers a 50 percent reimbursement for all non-federal funds spent on education and training for food stamp recipients who are not TANF recipients. This could draw down millions of dollars in new federal funds statewide and encourage training providers to get their eligible clients enrolled in food stamps.



The new FSET reimbursement program will likely operate as follows:

- Organizations will submit a roster of service recipients to DTA/UMass.
- DTA will identify which recipients are eligible for reimbursement and make the request for reimbursement to the federal government.
- DTA will receive 5 percent of the federal funds for administration and then pass the remaining 95 percent on to the organization that provided the matchable training.
- That training provider may keep 5 percent of these funds for administration and must spend the remaining 95 percent on new programs and services for any of its clients, even those who do not receive Food Stamps.

Keep in mind that only Food Stamp *recipients* are eligible for the match. A good way to increase the amount of funding that any organization receives is to make sure all eligible participants are enrolled in the Food Stamp program. As the details of the program become clearer this Fall, WSG will launch a series of meetings around the state to educate organizations on how they can access this new source of workforce development funding.

Want more information?

Please contact Dan Kobayashi, Project Director of the Workforce Solutions Group, at dkobayashi@critwomensunion.org or at 617-536-5651 x 160.

Workforce Issues on Television

Check out these programs on WGBH and local cable access television stations over the next few weeks that highlight important workforce issues and policies!

SkillWorks' "Building a 21st Century Workforce" Forum with Candidates for Governor

www.skill-works.org/forum.html

Candidates Lt. Governor Kerry Healey, Deval Patrick, Chris Gabrieli, Attorney General Tom Reilly, Christy Mihos, and Grace Ross shared their ideas on building up the workforce in Massachusetts. The forum was moderated by Janet Wu and also featured community guest speakers and residents who have benefited from job training programs.

BNN (Comcast 9/RCN 15 in Boston)
Fridays, 8/25, 9/1, 9/8, 9/15 – 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm
Sundays, 8/27, 9/3, 9/10, 9/17 – 9:00 pm

This program will also air on community access stations in Belmont, Billerica, Brookline, Fall River, Falmouth, Malden, Newton, North Adams, Waltham, Winthrop and Worcester. Contact the local station for broadcast information.

Waging a Living

http://www.wgbh.org/schedules/program-info?program_id=27932&episode_id=2871402

Roger Weisberg's documentary puts a human face on the growing economic squeeze that is forcing millions of workers into the ranks of the poor. Shot in the Northeast and California, it profiles four very different Americans who work full time but still can't make ends meet. Despite their hard work and determination, these four find themselves, as one of them observes, "hustling backwards."

Wed, Aug 30, 3am, WGBH 44
Sun, Sept 3, 4am, WGBH 44

Fri, Sept 22, 9:30pm, WGBH 2
Sun, Sept 24, 9pm, WGBH 44

One Family Scholars

Through financial support and a comprehensive network, One Family Scholars aims to end family homelessness, one family at a time. The program offers a multi-lateral approach to fostering economic independence through providing a range of services including financial support, mentorship, leadership training, financial advice, and career coaching. The recipients of One Family Scholarships are typically homeless or formerly homeless women with children. Scholars may pursue their Associates' or Bachelors' Degree, and some a Masters' or advanced degree in a special academic area, such as Law. Scholars are eligible for a grant of up to \$12,000 based on the scholar's individual need. Each Scholar is matched with a woman experienced in the Scholar's field of study who provides encouragement, academic and career advice, and networking opportunities.

The Scholars must demonstrate financial need – with family earnings below 200% of the federal poverty level. They must also present clear and realistic academic and career goals, strong potential for success in the chosen academic program, and the desire to participate actively in all aspects of the program.

Candidates must complete a comprehensive application. For more information or Monique Achu, Program Assistant, at machu@onefamilyinc.org or call 617.432.0504, ext. 213

Visit the program website:

www.onefamilycampaign.org/scholars/scholars_index.shtml

On the web Workforce Development Resources

<http://www.thebeehive.org>

Search the Boston site for information on training and employment resources and to use the "Career Coach" interest assessment tool for clients.

<http://cwc.cedac.org>

Commonwealth Workforce Coalition's website. Training and education resources for workforce professionals.

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

An integrated suite of national web sites that help businesses, job seekers, students, and workforce professionals find employment and career resources.

<http://www.sabes.org/workforce/index.htm>

SABES' workforce development resources

http://www.mlri.org/cori_project

Information about Mass. Law Reform Institute's CORI Project and resources for reading CORIs.

SkillWorks spoke recently with Toddye Anderson, a current One Family Scholar and participant in the SkillWorks-funded Partners in Career and Workforce Development program operated by Partners HealthCare.



SkillWorks: How did you find the One Family Scholars program?

Toddye: I had been working with Project Hope, and from there I did a transition to work program at Massachusetts General Hospital, and I graduated with a job in Pediatrics GI. Project Hope put me in touch with One Family. Actually, when I first applied, I didn't have enough information to submit a solid application. But after I networked with them, I wound up with a rental voucher, became active with Homes for Families, and I kept in touch with the people at One Family. Eventually, I applied for the scholarship a second time, and I was accepted. I am so thankful for all the support that propelled me forward.

SkillWorks: What has been the best part of the One Family program?

Toddye: I am benefiting most from the mentoring program. Fellow Scholars walk you through the process – they help me register for classes, encourage me take certain professors. I am new to pursuing educational goals, and having people there to help me has been so helpful. I have found a wealth of support services. Some of the women have come out of horrific situations – and I think, mine isn't so bad. If they can do it, I can do it.

SkillWorks: Five years ago your life was quite different than it is today – where do you see yourself five years in the future?

Toddye: I hope to have achieved at least one goal and will be working on the next. I hope to have completed my nursing degree and be well on my way to a law degree. In five years, my baby girl will graduate from high school, and I will hopefully be financially grounded enough to not have to stop my education.

Partnership Notes



Building Services Career Path Project

Building Services Career Path Project is a partnership of labor and management which aims to improve English language skills among a large immigrant workforce and to provide them with more advanced training in facility maintenance and skilled trades.

- In July and August, the Building Services Career Path Project held numerous orientations for the new Bridge to Career Advancement project for SEIU615 members at Harvard. Over 20 participants have signed up so far for this program that will help janitorial and maintenance staff attain their high school diplomas, learn job skills, and advance into high-demand careers at Harvard including laboratory technician and administrative/office management.

Health Care and Research Training Institute

HCRTI provides a pipeline from neighborhoods around the Longwood area into health care and research; the institute offers training, education, and support to front-line workers in the who are interested in advancing into areas of skill shortages.

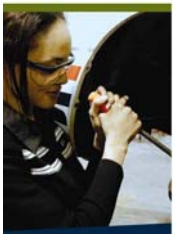
- HCRTI received a grant from the City of Boston's Math and Science Advancement initiative that will allow the institute to prepare more community residents for jobs requiring these skills in partnership with Roxbury Community College.
- HCRTI has added a new partner--the Mission Hill Jobs Collaborative, consisting of five organizations.
- HCRTI has welcomed four new staff, including director Lucy Meadows; career coach Ailsa Bennell; employment specialist Keyse Angelo; and Nuria Jaumot-Pascual, the coordinator of the new Math and Science Training Program.



Hotel Career Center

HCC provides job-specific language and skills training to job seekers, many of whom are recent immigrants or refugees, and places them in positions with growth potential at Hilton and other partner hotels.

- HCC bid a fond farewell to project manager Aviva Rothman-Shore who left to pursue a career in affordable housing research and policy. Martha Goldberg will take over project management duties.
- HCC will recognize about 12 graduates from its fourth pre-employment cycle this year on September 8.



Partners in Automotive Career Education

PACE promotes skill advancement among African Americans and immigrants by training new employees and current entry-level workers in automotive skills, English language skills, and math skills customized to the automotive industry.

- Four new employer partners hired PACE pre-employment participants from the last pre-employment cycle.
- 13 participants completed Module I (introductory automotive training) this summer; 13 others completed Module II (intermediate automotive training) and earned 15 college credits.

Partners in Career and Workforce Development

PCWD addresses labor shortages in nursing and other technical health care occupations by providing opportunities for low-income Boston residents to begin a career in the industry and advance professionally.

- PCWD will recognize pre-employment graduates on September 22.
- PCWD has finalized a pilot 100% release time program, set to begin on October 4, which will provide 10 employees at Brigham and Women's Hospital with six weeks of financial literacy training and follow-up financial counseling.



Boston Community Health Worker Initiative

Led by ABCD, BCHWI is in the midst of a planning process to increase employer investment in training and promotion of community health workers; develop and recognize career pathways in the field; and establish a postsecondary program for community health workers.

- In August, BCHWI hired a project director, Roma Goodlander, who comes from WATCH CDC in Waltham with a background in health care workforce development.
- 31 partner organizations are now involved in the planning of: education and training, employer relations and policy development. Ongoing work includes planning for a competency-based approach toward credentialing, an inventory of existing CHW certification models, the development of core competencies, CHW focus groups, key informant interviews with employers and the identification of additional funding sources.

Capacity Building for Grantees

- In the next several months, be on the look out for more trainings and events, including a follow-up to our April Business Value Assessment Training; a workshop on innovative financing strategies, and others.
- Don't forget to check the Commonwealth Workforce Coalition's website for regular training announcements!
- The next capacity building application deadline is September 18 for consideration at the September 27 committee meeting.

Funder Spotlight—the Hyams Foundation

Recently, Beth Smith, Executive Director of the Hyams Foundation, shared her thoughts on participating in the SkillWorks initiative.

SkillWorks: Why did Hyams decide to invest in SkillWorks?

Beth Smith: A few years ago, Hyams Foundation board and staff had decided that workforce development was a very large and complex issue where we didn't have a lot of expertise and would not make direct grants. The Foundation also wanted to work collaboratively in this area. It was great timing that SkillWorks was getting started around the same time and had many of the elements, including a public policy component, that made it compelling for us to get involved.

SkillWorks: What has Hyams learned from its participation in SkillWorks?

Beth Smith: I think we've really learned a lot about the need for workforce development and the needs of practitioners in the field. We've gotten a much better sense of the challenges and opportunities and the growth sectors in the Massachusetts economy. We've also learned that doing this work well, and seeing people make advancement, is really a long-term process that requires a long-term commitment. We're currently doing some strategic planning at Hyams, and our SkillWorks learnings will certainly be included in that process.

SkillWorks: What do you think has been the most surprising, gratifying, or interesting outcome so far?

Beth Smith: I've been surprised by the amount of money we were able to bring to workforce development through the public policy initiative and very interested in the fact that many different, non-traditional allies were a part of the process for passing the Workforce Solutions Act as part of the Economic Stimulus Bill. We learned that policy changes really require a big tent approach. Now that the legislation has been passed, we've begun to ask larger questions about what really needs to happen at a systems level to include people who have been excluded from the economic mainstream and how to address systematic barriers that keep people from advancing.

SkillWorks Out and About

- Angel Bermudez and Conny Doty will team up to give a presentation about SkillWorks at the Council on Foundations conference for community foundations here in Boston on September 18 at the Hynes Convention Center. Bob Giloth will also speak about a national workforce funders' collaborative in the works.
- Angel Bermudez and Loh-Sze Leung will attend an Investing in Workforce Intermediaries conference in Baltimore, MD in October to talk about SkillWorks' capacity building activities.

Find a complete list of articles, events, and resources at www.skill-works.org

SkillWorks Funders

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund and Frank W. and Carl S. Adams Memorial Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
Boston 2004
The Boston Foundation
City of Boston Neighborhood Jobs Trust
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation
The William Randolph Hearst Foundation
The Hyams Foundation
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
The John Merck Fund
The Rockefeller Foundation
State Street Foundation
United Way of Massachusetts Bay

SkillWorks Partnerships

Boston Community Health Worker Initiative
Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute
Building Services Career Path Project
Hotel Career Center
Partners in Career and Workforce Development
Partnership for Automotive Career Education
The Workforce Solutions Group

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Rowan Murphy, The John Merck Fund
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